



A MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM DEAN

One constant throughout the history and growth of MSM is change; we welcome new colleagues and bid fond farewell to others. Today, we say thank you and Godspeed to Eve J. Higginbotham, M.D., who has served with distinction as dean and senior vice president for Academic Affairs at Morehouse School of Medicine since April 24, 2006. Her contributions to MSM have been profound.

My career at MSM has also been marked by change. I arrived at MSM 27 years ago from Boston University School of Medicine, intrigued by this relatively new medical school and the unique opportunity it offered to help shape its future by mentoring and providing research training to African American students. I came up through the ranks at MSM and began my career as research director in the Department of Medicine and assistant professor in the Department of Pathology. During my tenure at MSM new challenges and responsibilities have come my way, and today I am vice president and senior associate dean for Research Affairs, professor

During my nearly three decades of service at MSM, I have encouraged a people-oriented, “team” environment, recognizing that every position in an organization is important, from the executive administrators to those who keep the facilities operational. I’ve always believed the most effective and productive organization is one that works as a Team and celebrates the accomplishments of everyone because “at the end of the day” it’s a Win for the Team.

MSM has realized many accomplishments over the past year. A few examples are:

- Our 25th commencement in May 2009 was the largest graduating class ever and the seven Ph.D. graduates was also a new record.
- Entering classes continue to display an upward trend in MCAT average, stability in overall GPA and science GPA.
- The Center of Excellence grant will receive \$2.7 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding over the next three years.
- The Center of Excellence for Sexual Health of the Satcher Health Leadership Institute graduated its first class of scholars.
- Federal research dollars continue to grow.
- MSM faculty members submitted 90 applications for ARRA funds. To date \$10.7 million has been awarded with \$56.2 pending funding.

THE TABLET

A Newsletter for the Constituents of the Morehouse School of Medicine

Winter 2010

- Thirty-one non-ARRA applications have been funded, totaling \$19,523,283 for first year awards and \$55,632,422 total funding for the entire award periods.
- We continue to diversify our research portfolio by building relationships with companies in the biotechnology, pharmaceutical, therapeutic, diagnostic, medical device, and other bioscience fields.
- We had a significant presence at the 2009 BIO International Convention held in Atlanta. Among the notable outcomes is a research relationship that has been established with Iverson Genetics who is also leasing space from us for a new satellite network laboratory.
- A team led by Dr. Gary Gibbons, chair of MSM's Department of Physiology and director of the Cardiovascular Research Institute, is one of a select group of researchers awarded grants totaling \$62 million to study how epigenetic changes define and contribute to specific human diseases and biological processes.

We recognize we have many challenges facing us in this coming year. One key issue is the projected decline or plateau of NIH funding and the resulting impact. However, we fully intend to enhance our current partnerships and collaborations while developing new ones to better achieve our goals. We also plan to diversify our funding model – which currently is primarily federal funding – to include government contracts, commercialization of new technologies, industry-based partnerships, and other avenues of collaboration.

Through implementation of our Strategic Plan, we will continue to focus on select areas of research and activities while improving and creating new education and research programs that will garner external support from government and philanthropic agencies. We will also improve and create central research information technology (IT) systems including bioinformatics and health informatics. The recruitment of “magnet investigators” in select areas that will strengthen our research and clinical enterprises is also key to our Research Agenda.

Iwelcome these challenges. I assure the MSM community that the same spirit, teamwork and can-do attitude that has served us so well through our history will continue during this coming year and help us to grow and thrive. Together We Can!

With warmest regards,
Sandra Harris-Hooker, Ph.D.
Vice President and Senior Associate Dean for Research Affairs
Interim Dean for Academic Affairs